



## ♦ HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER ♦

57 Hartford Street San Francisco, California 94114 Telephone: 415/863-2507

### Maitri: The First Year

It's now been one year since the "hospice" began with the arrival of J.D. Kobezak. As many of you know, according to medical opinion J.D. was expected to die about two weeks later, but having been through so much not only is he still here but he shows no sign of leaving and his courage has been the inspiration for our first year. What also refuses to leave is the powerful experience of caring that has developed at HSZC during this time. Many people have come together over the past year to create an environment of warm, heartfelt compassion and practical support for people with AIDS, and consequently for us all.

Our approach, initiated by Issan, has been to respond to the actualities of the present moment, which are outside our normal control (and understanding), we find ourselves initiated, by each encounter, into a new relationship with our intention and our ordinary activity. Something new and unexpected happens—an intimacy opens up that is not our usual experience of the present moment, and yet very familiar. This experience is at the heart of our "hospice" practice; and the seed from which we are forming the program.

Those of us searching for confirmation through the usual "business plan" approach find ourselves somewhat frustrated, if not completely baffled, by the enormous complexity of this simple approach. But time and again over the past year the "plan" approach has run into one snag after another and only careful adherence to the present moment has seen us through, and allowed us to take the next step. The challenge is to see if we are alert enough to drop everything and still stay present. Dropping those ideas is more painful, and can be more dangerous, than it looks.

The simplicity of what we are trying to do is also a real challenge—just to maintain an environment of service and care that meets the day-to-day needs of people with AIDS and their friends and lovers. Our biggest problem is always the same, how not to complicate these simple tasks with our preconceived ideas and unconscious habits (not to mention our unrevealed fears). So, many times, the daily irritations and frustrations have melted away through this intimacy of our contact with each other, and through our attending to and caring for the details of our daily life. This kind of attention can bring us into contact with a condition of settledness that others can feel; and this presence means so much to our friends who are so closely living with death. This daily teaching reminds us again and again to find our strength in each other and in the details of our common purpose, as well as our common environment.

The joy of this work is knowing that we are working together to enact real values that can be felt as well as observed; values that bring us together for reasons worth coming together for; and to do what needs to be done and do it well.



Through the deep generosity of Robert Breckenridge, who purchased the house and property at 61 Hartford Street to lease it to us, this project is now becoming a reality. The building was purchased in October; and we began moving into it in November. We now have six people living in the building: two staff, two students and two PWA's, (two more PWA's will move in, in January, when the rooms are ready). Many people over the last year have made the MAITRI project possible, including the members of the Advisory Board chaired by Al Schaaf, and Paul Rosenblum, head of the Fundraising Committee. Without their support and encouragement we would still be sinking in the swamp of our good intentions, without the capacity to follow through and build the necessary structures to sustain a project of this scale.

We have now begun a fundraising drive to support the hospice work over the next two years. The goal is set at \$180,000, which will allow us to operate the program for two years, do the necessary capital improvements to better serve people with AIDS (wheelchair ramps, etc.) and to have a small but prudent reserve available for the hazards of contemporary life. Funding at this level will make it possible for us to serve nearly 120 people with AIDS over this two year period and create a model for people interested in grass-roots hospice work that can be easily duplicated in other parts of the city and throughout the country.

We believe that this project is possible only through our mutual involvement and awareness and depends on each of us pulling together. This is your project as well as ours. Please help to make it happen.

—Kijun Steve Allen

### **Want to dance?**

Mindfulness practice is about caring for the people, situations, and things that comprise our daily lives with a careful state of mind that allows compassion to arise. With the acquisition of the house next door and the on-going increase in hospice residents, there are twice as many weeds in the newly doubled back yard, twice as many things to keep clean and care about, and hopefully at least twice as many thank you notes to type.

Issan once said Suzuki-roshi cleaned the toilets, not because of preference, but because he noticed that they needed cleaning. Mindfulness practice is encouraged by noticing what needs to be done right in front of us, and we can use the opportunity of what's right in front of us to settle our minds.

Each of us has special skills—carpentry, gardening or landscaping, nursing, cooking, word processing, calligraphy, office skills, writing-and teaching skills to others. There are also traditional Zendo positions-Doan, Chiden, Jiko, etc. that are crafts in themselves, capable of great refinement and artistry. Volunteering can be not only an opportunity to help but a profound opportunity to learn, often in unexpected ways.

This is a good time to start volunteering and hopefully everyone can do his or her part putting skills to use at 57 Hartford Street or next door at the Maitri hospice program. Can *you* help out maybe and contribute to an enlarged community life?

Volunteers can arrange a set schedule where they can take responsibility for regularly doing a particular job or taking a Zendo position. People can also drop by at their convenience to check what needs to be done that day.

Can you call me to volunteer some time?

—Niki Rothman 861-6352



## "Trust Your Feelings When Sitting Zazen"

Notes on a lecture by Zentatsu Richard Baker-roshi at HSZC, October 1988

The atmosphere was cozy and informal when Baker-roshi addressed HSZC recently. His demeanor was frequently jovial, his listeners were alert yet relaxed. "The penetrating calm that results from sitting can become our background mind," Baker-roshi said as he addressed a Sunday morning audience at HSZC, "and with practice it can reach into and inform our daily mind. Even the intention of sitting can be quite powerful and give solidity to our sense of body and space. Then a kind of assurance and stability comes up that allows another kind of thinking that's not possible otherwise."

As an example, Baker-roshi told us of a woman named Cornelia who drew illustrations of radiation damaged insects for scientists. She'd seen insects in Switzerland that were effected by radiation from Chernobyl. The very act of drawing enabled her to see things the scientists themselves couldn't see. If she was a practicing Buddhist doing this, Baker-roshi remarked, she might even been able to see the state of mind produced by her drawing. Baker-roshi said the mind can also fuse with and be transformed by sound. "Almost any object of perception can do this," he said. "This fusing goes with a kind of softness like feeling your eyelid on your eye." But a mental and physical pliancy occurs in zazen, a kind of blissful feeling that is independent of this fusion.

Another example Baker-roshi cited is the state of mind or "field" one automatically goes into when driving on a highway. We take this for granted so we don't study it. If we did, we could go into it whenever we wanted—even without the stimuli of cars and highway. In Buddhism, such a state is called a "formless body," he elaborated.

"It's a body more real than this physical body and we can actually have a bodily sense of it. It has qualities (e.g., clarity, luminosity) but no definition. It's one of the formless realms and arises out of a certain kind of breath and stability. As we get calmer, we can better perceive and analyze these feelings.—You can't think about this and if you do, you immediately change it." Women and more emotional men seem to get into these feeling states faster than most men do, Baker-roshi said. Men are generally aculturated to thinking, to fearing feeling. Thinking is more controllable. But by shifting your attitude, you can begin to breathe into these states.

"Suzuki-roshi used to say if you have a teacher, you want a teacher who discriminates *very* well," Baker-roshi said. "And the more you can just *discriminate*—and not just as a part of finding out who you are (which gets bogged down in details, anxieties, insecurities, etc.—and the more you can see discrimination as an *activity*, not as a definition of yourself) then you can withhold discrimination without the fear that you're going to lose yourself in some primordial feeling realm.

"So when you sit, sit down in your feelings, in your own space. And how you sit down is probably the most important single thing you can do as you're starting to practice. Sit down with the sense of something produced in sitting down. Everything produced is impermanent—you should have a feeling of putting an object on the cushion."

"Next bring your attention, with decisiveness and precision, to your breathing. Then have a feeling of settling down in your feelings and dropping *below* the surface of thought. If you can't do it at first, work out some personal mantra of trusting or welcoming your feelings and letting them lead you and lead your meditation for a while—not your thoughts. And while doing this, keep a sense of your breath—this clear tube of breath from top to bottom—as being something stable in the midst of your feelings. If you can trust your feelings, they will begin to show you the boundaries between these formless states of mind. In a very practical way they will reveal different qualities of your everyday experience. Thoughts are not subtle enough to notice such nuance.



"This is different from realization. You can have a "turn -around" in your life but that's not the same as staying on this path in all the moments of your life."

Baker-roshi went on to say these states of mind also have their own afflictions and vulnerabilities (they're not always good) because they're complete beings too. As you become more adaptable, you learn to shift from one state to another.

Here Baker-roshi contrasted Matisse and Picasso: "Matisse discovered something about drawing space more solidly. Objects became transparent. Matisse paints space itself as the power, the container; Picasso paints auras. Each object has its own field of power." Baker-roshi then referred this back to Buddhism.

"One can shift from an auric space to a space that's defined all at once but not limited to the definition of objects in space. This will make your friendships different. The actual way you're with a person will be different as you can shift between these kinds of space with each other. And the decisions you make about your life will be different."

He said crazy or highly distracted people can often find the "cracks" into this kind of experience more readily than others but they don't know what to do when they get there. (Here, everyone laughed.) They say "Wow, let's have another."

"But you can study the sutras through these spaces." Baker-roshi said. "Then you're studying where the sutras arose from. You can *draw* these spaces—as Cornelia drew the insects—you can draw these spaces out in yourself. Or Yunmen said when asked 'What about when everything has withered and died,' he replied: 'Exposed in the Golden Wind.'

"This may be the moment you die on," Baker-roshi concluded. "If you can know this moment with clarity and can call it up, then you may have that resolution and finality necessary to live each moment."

—Steve Abbott





## What's Maitri?

*Alan Schwartz is the Teacher-in-Residence at San Francisco Dharmadhatu and has been a student of Chögyam Trungpa-rinpoche for many years.*

"In the early days", said Alan Schwartz, speaking to us last Maitri evening, "Trungpa-rinpoche would say, 'Regard your thoughts like clouds drifting across the sky. Level your thoughts. You should really have to come upon the texture of your mind.' When I asked Trungpa-rinpoche how you do this, he replied, 'It's like touching a bubble with a feather.' That's the essence of Maitri...the essence of sitting. Sitting practice melts content, including the content of itself. It just melts into the present so the quality of that present moment has a sense of absolute forgiveness or mercy."

Expanding on his close connection with his late teacher Trungpa-rinpoche, Alan Schwartz continued, "Maitri implies an intimate connection between unconditional mercy and unconditional presence". It's a quality of the heart in a natural light—It is incredibly important and a central part of the practice that meditation isn't just to develop a state of ice cool precision that doesn't care about anything and gives up everything, but that actually the present moment of unconditionally being with whatever is in our state of mind has enormous warmth, naturally arising warmth—The sense of letting go, abruptly releasing the sense of struggle, has a quality of mercy—so that there's no one to stand behind you and say you cheated. You can just let go. That cuts the chain of habitual struggle that we maintain. It cuts it on the spot and it cuts it in an environment of some kind of warmth and friendliness towards our confused mind.

If you sit in the spring and in the summer and in the fall and in the winter sometimes you get snowflakes in your head and sometimes you get sunburned but essentially there's some very powerful quality that speaks to our nature that has to do with courage and gentleness and facing directly whatever arises in the present moment and dealing with that in a straightforward kind of being as much as we can. Chögyam Trungpa used to say the posture of sitting has a soft front and a straight back. It's a lesson you can't really convince anyone of, that can't be conveyed in words— it's essentially the power of steadfastness with whatever arises. When you actually have attained that, there's nothing further to be afraid of. You've actually overcome fear— undercut it fundamentally."

This is the way Alan Schwartz recalled his meditation training. "The way in which we were taught about it, Maitri begins with one's self as if we have this pet which is awkward and sort of clunky, and prone to all kinds of hallucinatory obstacles, constantly struggling over its' own awkwardness. We start with making friends with that pet in some way. The days of going to achieve enlightenment by some kind of warfare are over—I'm talking about the states of mind we all encounter when we commit to entering a path of practice. Once you enter a path of practice you begin a round of exploring every possible way of avoiding practice. The sense of our practice as moving ahead or developing has to do with going on that journey wholeheartedly. Going on that journey with a joyful mind or at least a sense of humor because you're really in trouble without a good sense of humor if you take on a spiritual path."

When he was leaving, Alan hugged Issan and asked affectionately, "When are you going to come over to our house to play?"

—Niki Rothman

*Rick London is a longtime member of the HSZC Sangha. He has published several books of poetry and is currently working on an album combining music and poetry.*

*Note: "Upaya" is skilful means; "Hrdaya" means heart/mind.*

## PIECE

Light after-  
noon light as  
lift or list of

objects sans  
margin or core, so  
too, light after-

noon sound—all's  
common ground

## UPAYA

all those places,  
faces, yet, or  
then, or

again, &  
again, no  
one knows, none

holds, is,  
was, no  
home

## HRDAYA

set-active  
considered as possession

two kinds of death  
is shoreless

the unending accumulation  
to break up the

body whose substance is nothing  
but a transformation

and concomitant fictions  
having no room

devolving on nothing  
no hindrance

*David Bullock is a HSZC student who has been at the Tassajara monastery during the last year.*

## Tassajara Thoughts

Autumn slowly moves toward winter. Mornings are cold, hinting at the days to come but afternoons are still remembering summer. Our lives keep pace with the seasons, one thing following another. Zazen, meals, study, work, Zazen again—a day begun and ended. One day is much like another at Tassajara a repeating pattern that allows us, if we look closely enough, to see the details of our lives. Monastic life is simple and satisfying. We leave the world and go to the mountain, we leave the mountain and enter the market place. Different activities, but when practice sustains us, Buddha's activity. "All things have their function, it is a matter of use in the appropriate situation." How to find Buddha's activity in each situation? Life at Tassajara and life at Hartford Street may seem quite different. Mending robes and studying Sutras are strange and archaic actions to some. Cleaning up shit or dealing with a drunk on the bus might be viewed as uncomfortably mundane and necessary. So what's the difference? By just completely giving myself to each situation as best I can (including the attendant joy or discomfort) I can begin to find an opportunity to express Buddha's activity. These opportunities are endless.

—David Bullock

Drinking tea, eating rice  
Looking up at the mountains  
Looking down at the stream  
How serene and relaxed I feel.

—Pao-tzu Wen-chi

Drinking martinis, eating hamburgers  
Looking up at the skyscrapers  
Looking down at the trash.  
Do I feel serene and relaxed?

—David





### Mayumi Oda's Talk: Pacifism with a Punch

Bright colors predominated in the book Issan showed me earlier. Plump Devas cavorting in sword games. Or circling the globe on the backs of elephants that remind me of Babar in kids' books. Or discoursing to winds as nature deities peep out. So I wasn't surprised at the Maitri evening. Showing us her recent work—large scale serigraphs she'd brought for the occasion—Mayumi looked herself like one of her models—a larger-than-life Buddhist feminist? Speaking in the primary colors of kids' books.

As if a life was being presented as inseparable from the work and the other way around as well—that the work couldn't be separate from the life? Explanations followed. There was—first she told us—a childhood in Japan strongly influenced by a father who was never able to be the zen priest he wanted to be. Then memories of an energetic "tigress" of a grandmother: determined to be her own person in spite of restraints of traditionalism. The "woman warrior" Mayumi became (she said) took this woman's energy as a sign of the solution to her own problem: how to merge growing feminist feelings she was aware of with the best of a religion she grew up with all around her, Samurai-influenced patriarchal Zen Buddhism.

Next came the U.S.: She tried her fortunes here first in the decade of the 60's. Found a husband. Left him. Then follow many bone-(and ego-) crunching Sesshins at Green Gulch. From sitting there develops a Green Deva—one of the serigraphs she shows us. (Oohs and aahs from Rosa indicate everyone's sincere admiration at this point). Then comes my own personal favorite—a glowering Kali-like Deva, all dark and furious & wildly intimidating. Then our Hartford Street community's really surprised—we get to choose of these pictures to keep for ourselves—one of the Devas we've just seen! Stymied, no one can choose—for a moment. Then Issan leaps into the breach by choosing—not the dark brow-furrowing Wrath-Goddess I liked best—but a lovely calm blue scene, happy and blissful with animals made of gossamer and light. In the doorway I notice—I haven't seen her earlier, was she here all along then?—Another woman watching Mayumi with her eyes, waiting for her. I'm seeing *every* woman, *all* women, in brighter, more primary colors now. Like in her books then? Or like in life? Or *what* exactly?

—Bruce Boone

**Comings and Goings,  
with Thanks, and Warm Wishes for a Happy New Year.**

- We would like to express gratitude to Sunday lecturers Ryushin Paul Haller, Tensho David Schneider, Karin Sobun Katherine Thanas, and Zenshin Philip Whalen.
- Thanks also to our October Maitri speaker Tenryu Paul Rosenblum, who spoke on "Right Livelihood".
- On October 9th Zentatsu Richard Baker-roshi was Sunday lecturer. We're grateful to Baker-roshi for visiting us and honoring our practice place by sharing his understanding with us.
- His Eminence Jamgon Kongtrul-rinpoche, a Tibetan Lama of the Kagyu lineage, visited November 4th. He offered incense in the zendo and visited Coming Home Hospice with Issan.
- In addition we were honored by a visit from the Dalai Lama's official Rain Maker, Yeshe Dorje-rinpoche, who blessed the house and presented Tibetan medicine to the hospice residents.
- We took part in the annual AIDS Day of Remembrance ceremonies held at Grace Cathedral.
- Teacher in Residence at San Francisco Dharmadhatu, Alan Schwartz was our November Maitri speaker. He shared insights about his teacher the Venerable Chogyam Trungpa-rinpoche and spoke on the subject of Maitri. Thank you Alan.
- We note with sadness the recent death of Alfred Michael Rea, a longtime friend of HSZC.
- From Friday, December 2nd through Sunday, December 4th we conducted a Rohatsu sitting to commemorate Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment.
- We'd also like to thank December Maitri speaker Mayumi Oda, an artist whose work appears in collections of many museums and at the Library of Congress. She has practiced Zen for many years at Green Gulch Farm.
- Our annual Segaki Ceremony and Pot Luck Social was held Dec. 17th. The guests included members of the Gay Men's Spiritual Retreat. Segaki is a traditional Buddhist ceremony to call forth spirits of those who have died during the previous year in order to remember and honor them, and let go—helping them to enter the Great Realm of Realization. A fire ritual concludes the ceremony in which the names of those who have died are burned.
- We note with gratitude on behalf of the whole HSZC community that Issan at this point has visited hundreds of sick or dying people and comforted them.
- We celebrated New Year's Eve 1989 with a quiet ceremony and then sat zazen as 108 bells slowly rang. Afterward, we shared sake and good cheer.
- New Year's Day itself began with zazen followed by the annual members' brunch prepared with care and artistry by HSZC student David Bullock who has cooked professionally at "Greens" restaurant. A warm welcome back to the City, David!



## Special Events Schedule

Saturday	Dec.31	New Year's Eve: 11:00 pm zazen, 108 bells
Sunday	Jan.1	Members' Brunch: 9:00 am zazen, 11:00 am brunch
Tuesday	Jan.3	Maitri Evening: zazen 6:00 pm, dinner 7:00 pm Speaker: Karin Sobun Katharine Thanas, 7:45 pm
Sunday	Jan.8	One Day Sitting, 5:00 am-5:00 pm
Friday	Jan.20	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40 pm
Sunday	Jan.29	ANNUAL HSZC GENERAL MEETING, 4:00 pm
Sunday	Feb.5	One Day Sitting, 5:00 am-5:00 pm
Tuesday	Feb.7	Maitri Evening: zazen 6:00 pm, dinner 7:00 pm Speaker: Diane DiPrima, 7:45 pm
Monday	Feb.20	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40 pm
Sunday	Mar.5	One Day Sitting, 5:00 am-5:00 pm
Tuesday	Mar.7	Maitri Evening: zazen 6:00 pm, dinner 7:00 pm Speaker: Cosmic Lady, 7:45 pm
Wednesday	Mar.22	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40pm

## Weekly Schedule

Sunday:	Lecture and discussion, 10:00 am
Monday:	Koan Study Class with Kijun Steve Allen, 8:00 pm
Tuesday:	NEW COURSE OFFERING: Introduction to Mahayana Buddhism class with Zenshin Philip Whalen, 8:00 pm beginning January 10th and ending on the 28th of March. The fee will be \$5 per class or \$40 for the ten week course.
Wednesday:	Shanti Support Group, 7:00 pm
Thursday:	Shanti Support Group, 7:00 pm

## Maitri Evenings

January 3	Karin Sobun Katherine Thanas will speak. She is a zen priest who has received Transmission from Tenshin Reb Anderson. A longtime teacher at San Francisco Zen Center, she is currently teaching at the new Monterey Zen Meditation Group.
February 7	Diane DiPrima is famous as a poet who draws from a wide range of sources for her work. A sense of family, the traditions of Native Americans, and alchemy all inform her poetry. She is also a lively raconteur.
March 7	Cosmic Lady, Janice/Janus Kramer/Karma is our March Maitri speaker. She has long been a San Francisco institution. Cosmic Lady publishes and distributes the broadsides that you may have encountered around town offering: "Community Awareness, Cosmic Awareness and Basic and/or Advanced Karma Training." Cosmic Lady says, "Mama Earth is a school/training planet, and the final exams are coming up!"



San Francisco Zen Center  
300 Page Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102

57 Hartford Street San Francisco, California 94114 Telephone: 415/863-2507

## ♦ HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER ♦

NON PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 27  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

### Daily Schedule

Monday through Friday:

Zazen	6:00 am
Interval	6:25 am
Zazen	6:30 am
Service	6:55 am

Zazen	6:00 pm
Service	6:40 pm

On Sundays there is an informal period of zazen at 9:00 am and a lecture at 10:00 am, followed by tea and discussion. The morning ends with *soji* (temple cleaning) in the zendo.

There is zazen instruction and orientation on Mondays at 5:30 pm. If you can't attend at this time please call us.